



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO



PRESS RELEASE

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There Are No Holiday Festivities in Jail

RUOK? Is the Wrong Message to Send this Holiday Season

(San Diego CA) As you celebrate the holiday season enjoying traditions, food, family and fun, be reminded that the San Diego Police Department, together with police, sheriff and CHP personnel and the "Avoid The 14 DUI Taskforce", will be working during this holiday season, from December 16, 2011, to January 2, 2012, to arrest anyone caught driving under the influence of alcohol and/or controlled substances. The San Diego Police Department will conduct a DUI/Driver's License Checkpoint on Friday, December 16, 2011, as part of San Diego PD's commitment to the traffic safety campaign.

"RUOK?" is the text message version of the often heard question, "Are you okay to drive?" If you have to ask someone the question, you already know the answer. You know they have had too much to drink or are showing signs of being "buzzed." You know that are not okay to drive. Asking the question doesn't relieve you of the responsibility. Do the right thing and call a cab for them, take them home yourself, or offer your couch.

DUI/ Driver's License Checkpoints, Multi-Agency DUI Task Force deployments and roving DUI patrols are scheduled locally in partnership with law enforcement statewide and around the county during the Winter Holiday Anti-DUI Campaign. DUI Checkpoints are placed in locations that have the greatest opportunity for achieving drunk and drugged driving deterrence. Officers will be contacting drivers passing through the checkpoint for signs of alcohol and/or drug impairment. Grant-funded Drug Recognition Experts will be staffing most of the checkpoints.

DUI Checkpoints, along with regularly scheduled high-visibility DUI enforcement, are proven strategies with the goal of removing impaired drivers from the road and heightening awareness of the dangers of driving under the influence of drugs and alcohol. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), sobriety checkpoint programs can yield considerable cost savings: \$6 for every \$1 spent. The San Diego Police Department has 13 additional DUI Checkpoints and operations scheduled throughout the course of the coming year.

"There will be no spreading holiday cheer behind the bars of a jail cell," Officer McCullough said. "Don't let your 2011 holiday season end in an arrest or worse, death. Remember, whether you've had way too many or just one too many, it's not worth the risk."

In December 2009, there were 753 people killed nationwide in crashes that involved drivers or motorcycle riders with blood alcohol concentrations of .08 Blood Alcohol Content or higher. In California, 57 individuals died on the state's streets and highways.

"The message is simple, ***Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over***. Drinking alcohol and driving do not mix. If you plan to consume alcohol, you should also plan not to get behind the wheel of a vehicle or ride a motorcycle," said Officer Mark McCullough.

Officer McCullough recommends these simple tips for a safe holiday season:

- Plan a safe way home before the festivities begin;
- Before drinking, designate a sober driver and leave your car keys at home;
- If you're impaired, use a taxi, call a sober friend or family member, or use public transportation;
- If you happen to see a drunk driver on the road, don't hesitate to contact your local law enforcement - Call 911; and
- And remember, "RUOK?" is a ridiculous question. If you think they've had too much to drink, they probably have. Help him or her make other arrangements to get home safely.

The national ***Driver Sober or Get Pulled Over*** crackdown is led by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) and NHTSA, with the California Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign, combining high-visibility enforcement and heightened public awareness through publicity.

For statewide and local Avoid DUI Task Force Campaign Enforcement Schedules for the county and Daily DUI Arrest/Fatal Stats for the county and region, visit www.californiaavoid.org. The Program is funded by the California Office of Traffic Safety which reminds everyone to please – Report Drunk Drivers – Call 9-1-1!

Media Notes: To schedule an interview regarding Anti Drunk-Driving efforts, or request a ride-along with law enforcement during the holiday period, please contact Officer Mark McCullough at (619) 818-4860 or via email at mmccullough@pd.sandiego.gov.

